

BLUES CAN WIN TITLE TOMORROW

WYCOMBE Wanderers, current holders of the Rothmans Isthmian League title, can win the championship for the fourth time in five years tomorrow (Saturday). If they beat third placed Dagenham at Loakes Park, the title is almost assured (writes Stuart Earp).

At the time of writing, the result of the match between Enfield and Dagenham at Southbury Road is not known. The best outcome from Wycombe's point of view would be a draw. That would leave Enfield with 93 points and Dagenham with 90. If Wanderers then beat Dagenham, they would finish with 95 points and Dagenham's game at Tooting on Tuesday would be irrelevant.

If Enfield overcame Dagenham last night (Thursday) they would then have 95 points and Wycombe will need to win tomorrow to take the championship on goal average — providing, that is, they do not concede too many goals. If Dagenham beat Enfield, Wycombe and Tooting, they will finish with a clear 95 points.

Wanderers' task tomorrow is plain: They must beat Dagenham without conceding goals.

It sounds relatively simple on paper but after Tuesday night's game against Bishop's Stortford, nerves are obviously going to play a key part in this all-important game. For 70 minutes Wycombe struggled to string their game together against Stortford, who packed their defences to the limit. Only after they scored did Wanderers look like championship material.

Dagenham will be a different proposition. The chances are they will not be able to sit back and rely on their defence — they need to win as much as Wycombe. In that case it will be a battle of the two most skilful sides in Division One.

Although several of the Wycombe players suffered minor injuries against Stortford, manager **Brian Lee** should be able to select from a full squad. In recent weeks Lee has made several changes to the side and no one will know the actual line-up on Saturday until shortly before kick-off time. He has several difficult decisions to make.

Take the front three. Dylan Evans had one of his poorest games for a long time on Tuesday but possesses more speed than Tony Horseman who, although struggling with a leg in-

jury, is still a deadly finisher. Steve Perrin is also injured but banged in two fine goals against Stortford to stamp his claim for a full game tomorrow. The only certainty seems to be Keith Searle. There are arguments for and against playing Horseman-Perrin-Searle with Evans as substitute but fitness will probably decide which formation plays.

Lee also has problems in midfield. Dave Alexander came into the side and scored from the spot on Tuesday to cap a fine game. But Howard Kennedy must be considered for the Dagenham game. Neither player is strong in the air and it is a question of Alexander's work rate or Kennedy's power shooting.

Dagenham's feat of coming up from Division Two this season and putting themselves into a title-winning position 12

months later, is a remarkable achievement. When one considers they have played a total of 86 games this season and 26 since March 1, their achievement is even more commendable.

Retaining the bulk of last year's team, they signed on several players under contract at the start of the term. Jim Lye, Paul Currie, John Borland, Norman, Welch and Tony Rosethorn all came to bolster the side — Borland from Queen's Park in Scotland and Rosethorn, an amateur international, from North Shields.

Kenny Gray, now in the veteran stage of an illustrious career, made a successful comeback in mid-term after almost quitting the game through a knee injury. He has 21 goals since his return. Chief dangerman, though, appears to be Mal Harkins. He has already smashed the club goalscoring record this season with 60, including 36 in league games. Neville Fox has 26.

The Essex club, of course, have already beaten Wanderers this term, back in early September. The match was played in bizarre conditions, a gale-force wind making football almost impossible. Harkins scored the only goal.

If Dagenham have any weakness, it appears to be in defence. They have conceded more goals than Enfield and Wycombe but their attack is needle sharp. Much will depend on the attitude of the players.

Wanderers have the advantage of a marvellous home record behind them and a 4-5,000 crowd. If they can stay cool, take their chances and play at their best, I can only see one team there at the finish.

How they stand

ROTHMANS ISTHMIAN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE (up to and including 15/5/75)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wycombe Wanderers	41	27	11	3	92	30	92
Enfield	41	28	8	5	74	25	92
Dagenham	39	28	5	6	90	35	89
Dulwich Hamlet	41	23	10	8	74	38	79
Tooting and Mitcham	40	23	9	8	70	43	78
Iford	41	22	10	9	96	51	76
Leatherhead	41	22	10	9	82	42	76
Slough Town	42	17	6	19	68	52	57
Oxford City	42	16	9	17	61	58	57
Sutton United	42	17	6	19	68	63	57
Bishop's Stortford	41	17	6	18	55	59	57
Hitchin Town	41	15	10	16	56	69	55
Hendon	42	15	7	20	59	74	52
Walthamstow Avenue	42	14	9	19	58	60	51
Woking	42	12	10	20	53	73	46
Barking	40	12	8	20	57	77	44
Hayes	42	10	14	18	52	66	44
Leytonstone	42	12	7	23	42	61	43
Kingstonian	42	13	4	25	48	73	43
Clapton	42	12	4	26	46	96	40
Walton and Hersham	42	9	4	29	37	108	31
Bromley	42	6	3	33	25	110	21